

ABSTRACT

5 Viral proteins derived from an enterically transmitted non-A/non-B viral hepatitis agent (HEV) are disclosed. In one embodiment, the protein is
10 immunologically reactive with antibodies present in individuals infected with the viral hepatitis agent. This protein is useful in a diagnostic method for detecting infection by the enterically transmitted agent. Specific epitopes have been identified that are reactive with sera of individual infected with different strains of HEV. Also disclosed are DNA probes derived from a cloned sequence of the viral agent. These probes are useful for identifying and sequencing the entire viral agent and for assaying the presence of the viral agent in an infected sample, by 15 using probe-specific amplification of virus-derived DNA fragments.